

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. Iran Could Face Further Economic Sanctions over Nuclear Program (03-03-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The Iranian regime's refusal to provide a full disclosure of its nuclear development program to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will leave the international community no choice but to pursue further, deeper economic sanctions, U.S. Ambassador Glyn Davies said March 3.

The IAEA 35-nation board of governors is holding a weeklong meeting in Vienna, and the major topic has been Iran and its nuclear development program.

"Iran has not suspended its enrichment and heavy water-related programs, as required by the U.N. Security Council and the board of governors," said Davis, who is the U.S. permanent representative to the IAEA in Vienna. Western nations fear that Iran may be trying to develop nuclear weapons. Uranium enrichment is one necessary component of weapons development to build a nuclear bomb.

"We find ourselves eight years into an investigation which Iran seems determined to defy, obfuscate and stymie," Davies said.

The U.N. Security Council previously imposed three rounds of political and economic sanctions to convince Iranian leaders to halt uranium enrichment and give up plans for a weapons program. In November 2009, the IAEA board [voted to censure Iran](#) for building a second uranium enrichment plant at Qom, and the Iranian regime followed up by announcing plans to build 10 more plants to enrich uranium. Iran's primary nuclear development facility is near the city of Natanz.

Newly elected IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano told the board March 1 that his investigators "cannot confirm that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities because Iran has not provided the agency with the necessary cooperation. I request Iran to take steps toward the full implementation of its safeguards agreement and its other obligations as a matter of high priority."

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — plus Germany have been conducting intensive talks with Iranian officials over their nuclear program. This group grew out of earlier efforts by Britain, France and Germany to convince Iran to suspend uranium enrichment in return for a package of incentives. Three years ago, the six powers also offered Iran a package of trade and diplomatic incentives to forgo its uranium enrichment efforts, and later added to the incentives, but Iranian authorities continued to reject suspension of uranium enrichment.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told the Senate in February that a new set of sanctions is likely from the Security Council. But she also told another congressional committee that the United States may pursue another course.

"We will look at additional bilateral and preferably multilateral sanctions with willing nations, on top of whatever we get out of the Security Council," Clinton [said February 25](#) before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Spanish delegation to the IAEA board meeting, which is representing the European Union, issued a strong warning to Iran to comply with Security Council resolutions or face a fourth set of sanctions. It has been reported by news media that the next set of sanctions could focus on the banking, shipping and insurance sectors of Iran's economy.

SANCTIONS IMPOSED

Since 2006, the Security Council has imposed three sets of sanctions that are still in effect. The first set concerns sensitive nuclear materials and froze the assets of individual Iranians and some companies. The second set included new arms and financial sanctions, and the third set added further travel and financial sanctions.

The United States shut Iran's Bank Saderat out of the U.S. financial system in September 2006. It did the same thing to Bank Melli and Bank Mellat in October 2007. The United States has also sanctioned Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, which controls the nuclear development program. And the U.S. Congress [is considering legislation](#) that would require more and deeper sanctions.

The European Union has imposed visa bans on senior Iranian officials and Iran's top nuclear and ballistics experts. Britain froze more than \$1.6 billion in Iranian assets under EU- and U.N.-imposed sanctions. Britain has also frozen business ties with Bank Mellat and the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines.

"Iran's continued production of low-enriched uranium and its move to enrich up to nearly 20 percent are, unfortunately, just the latest additions to the long list of steps Iran has taken in

disregard of its obligations to all of us,” Davies told the IAEA board. “We hope that Iran will change its current course and seek the path of negotiations.”

“Not doing so leaves the international community no choice but to pursue further, deeper sanctions to hold Iran accountable,” he said.

2. Briefing by Special Representative Holbrooke on Recent Trip (03-02-2010) **Holbrooke discusses Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, Georgia, Germany**

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman
Washington, D.C.

MR. CROWLEY: Sorry for the delay. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Department of State and our daily press briefing. We always like a guest lecturer to come and give us the latest on significant regional issues, none more important than our ongoing efforts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics. Richard was just on an extensive trip around the world that included stops in many countries, including, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and finishing up in Georgia and Germany. So he thought it was a good time to come down and just give you a current sense of the state of play in Afghanistan.

I think he'll be happy to entertain questions on the situation in Marja and also how other governments in the region see the issues unfolding and how they're – we're working together very closely with them. And then we'll follow up on other subjects.

Richard, thank you.

AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE: Thank you very much for coming. This is the pattern that P.J. and I are trying to evolve, that after every major trip I come down here and we just talk, so I want to talk about this trip which was my fifth trip this year and my second to the Gulf, second to South Asia, but my first, since taking this job, to Central Asia. And this is part of an accelerating intensification of our diplomatic outreach efforts.

In the last six months, we've had delegations in Beijing, in Russia, in Turkey, in all – almost every country in the Gulf and, of course, in Europe, in China and now for the first time, we've reached into Central Asia. I was in four of the five “stans,” in order – if I can remember them, we've moved so fast – Uzbekistan, first; then Kyrgyzstan; then Tajikistan; and then Kazakhstan. We had also planned to go to Turkmenistan, but through a logistical communications failure, we did not get the final clearance to land in Ashkabad until we were on the runway taking off for Estonia, so we were locked in. And that's a minor story, but that's the only reason we weren't in Ashkabad.

Now the purpose of this, as we alluded to last time I was down here, was to visit all the countries in the region, all the neighbors – with the exception of Iran. I've now talked face-to-face with the leadership. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, which doesn't have a common border with Afghanistan – the very important Manas Transit Center, which will be – which we will renew the arrangements some in the next few weeks, and I wanted to launch that process. We've very grateful to the Kyrgyz's Government for that support. And I had a very emotional meeting with the troops at Manas. Thirty-five thousand Americans go through Manas training – Transit Center every month. And we just dropped in on the room where they would talk to their families on Skype and playing foosball and just chatted with some of them coming in and out. And that's always valuable to have an encounter with – we talked, in particular, to a young first lieutenant who was on his way back to Alaska who

had been in Khost and who gave us a very vivid word description of his efforts down there. I can go back to that later if it interests you.

In Tashkent, of course, we talked about the Northern Distribution Network and its importance to us. Most of the supplies coming through that entry point into Afghanistan – the Northern Distribution Network – come through Uzbekistan. In Kazakhstan, we talked about improving and increasing our over-flight facilities and improving rail transit, which is an issue we're interested in. And in Tajikistan, we talked about also northern distribution issues. And in addition, we talked about resources. Water is a huge problem, as you all know, in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And Tajikistan has one of the greatest water potentials in the world, and President Rahmon described that to us in some detail. And we have, on a separate basis we have got a water resources task force now set up in the Department to examine how we can additionally help the countries of the area, and particularly Pakistan with the water issue.

And finally, after the four Central Asian Republics, we went on to Georgia. Now, Georgia – and we visited the Georgian battalion outside Tbilisi which will – will be deployed next month to Afghanistan.

The U.S. Marines, who are advising the training and who do this as a profession, said these are among the best troops that they've ever seen. These – many of these troops fought in Iraq with the coalition. Those of you who know Georgia, know that it's a mountainous country with terrain features that are sometimes similar to Afghanistan. They have a tremendous fighting tradition. And they are going into Afghanistan with no national caveats, and after they unpack and get acclimatized, they will be integrated into the Marine operations in Helmand.

On a per capita basis, right now, they are – they appear to have the highest per capita troop contribution of any country in the world. They'll be up to about 950 troops when this battalion gets there. It's an extremely important deployment and we are grateful for it. President Saakashvili and I had discussed this a year ago and started the process which has led to the deployment, and he accompanied me on this trip to the training mission. I was not there on any other subject. We did not discuss U.S-Russian relations. We did not discuss issues involving their future relationships with NATO. This was an Afghanistan-related trip.

But I want to express with great strength on behalf of the entire U.S. Government how much the United States Government appreciates the Georgian contribution. It came by coincidence on the same day that the government in the Netherlands fell. No, this is an important deployment and it's gotten far too little attention.

The – Germany, of course, was to continue our high-level coordinations with one of our most important allies, but the main focus in Germany was the German support of the police training program. Germans – by constitution, the Germans cannot put their police under a military command, and I'm sure all of you understand why that was written into the constitution. But within that framework, they're doing a very important job on police training which is being closely coordinated with the military command, but under separate command arrangements consistent with the German constitution.

And we hope they will increase the amount of trainers. They do – although we raised, we pulled together a very impressive number of additional training personnel in the last week at the force generation conference, we're still short some training personnel, so that's important.

And the front end of the trip was in Doha and Saudi Arabia. Doha was to address the Brookings Institution Conference, the World Islamic Forum. They're one of the best conferences in the world run by Ambassador Martin Indyk and the Qatari Government. Talked to the Qatari officials, of course, and then went to Riyadh to continue our dialogue with them, which is – obviously Saudi Arabia is of enormous importance.

Now, in the middle of this, I went to Afghanistan and Pakistan and saw the leadership. I've now seen President Karzai three times in three different countries in the last month. We've had extensive and detailed discussions on the implementation of his plans as he outlined them in Kabul on November 19th, in London on January 28th, and in Munich on February 6th or 7th – I don't remember which date, but at the Munich conference. And so the conversations in Kabul were a continuation of that. And I met with other members of the government as well. Did not have a chance to get out of town, but I spent a lot of time with General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry.

Finally, in Pakistan, extensive discussions with the president, Prime Minister Gilani, the leader of the opposition Nawaz Sharif, and the leadership of the Pakistani Army General Kayani and his senior colleagues. Those – that dialogue will continue. My next trip to the region will be with Admiral Mullen. Together, we did this just under a year ago. I think some of you in this room were on that trip. And Admiral Mullen and I try to do about one civ-mil – joint civ-mil trip a year, and that trip will include India.

Last point: We had – P.J. and I had hoped today to bring the FBI director with me, Bob Mueller, who has just come back from an important trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He had a conflict and I apologize. If there's interest, maybe we can bring him over at another time. I would recommend, P.J., that you consider that because I think Mueller's trip up – P.J. and I heard a detailed discussion by him yesterday. It was in furtherance of our trilateral meetings last year which we're going to resume in a few months here.

And in that – and in his trip, he put together a meeting between the two ministers of interior, Minister Atmar and Minister Malik of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is really important. The coordination between the two countries is at the core of the policies that we've been developing over the last 13 months. And we really think that Director Mueller's meetings were important and move things forward.

So with that outline of what we did, I'll be happy to take your questions. Thank you.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/March/20100303114849xjsnommis0.7420705.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0hCaTjEBc>

3. United States Praises Pakistani Actions Against Extremists (03-02-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan praised the actions of Pakistan's government and military, saying military operations and apprehensions of leading Afghan Taliban figures inside Pakistan are contributing to efforts to remove Taliban fighters from the battlefield through reintegration.

"I just want to express my appreciation to the Pakistani government and its army for what it's doing," Ambassador Richard Holbrooke told reporters in Washington March 2. He mentioned the military offensives in Swat and South Waziristan, as well as the [recent capture of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar](#) and other senior Afghan Taliban figures who have been living in Pakistan.

"They're doing these things in the face of enormous, overwhelming economic problems," including water and energy supplies. "We, in turn, are trying to increase our support for the Pakistanis," he said.

Holbrooke said that anecdotal information suggests that the Pakistani activities, along with operations in central Helmand province by Afghan security personnel and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), are causing some Taliban fighters to consider renouncing violence and returning to civilian life under the authority of the Afghan government.

"ISAF is reporting more and more people contacting them and saying, 'We want to talk about separate peace arrangements,'" Holbrooke said. "It isn't clearly quantifiable [but] it's logical to assume it's happening," he said.

"These are positive events, and they should be welcomed by anybody who opposes extremism and terrorism," he added.

U.S. relations with Pakistan's government and military are "much better today than they were 13 months ago" when the Obama administration began, he said.

According to a [March 1 media note](#) released by the State Department, Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province Elite Force received eight armored personnel carriers and surveillance equipment from the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. The vehicles, as well as equipment such as night vision binoculars, global positioning systems and solar panels, will support the force's actions against violent extremists, according to the note.

The note said U.S. civilian law enforcement assistance to Pakistan totaled \$49.5 million in 2009, including funds for equipping, training and rehabilitation of police facilities.

The Obama administration says it also welcomes the recent restoration of dialogue between Pakistan and India. [Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley](#) commended the leadership of both countries February 25, saying, "It was a courageous step to open the door to dialogue again," after previous efforts were disrupted by the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

"We certainly hope that both countries will build on this dialogue in the weeks and months ahead," Crowley said.

Holbrooke said both India and Pakistan have "legitimate security interests" in Afghanistan and in the region and that the United States is seeking to improve its relations with both.

"In New Delhi and in Islamabad, people come up to us and say, 'Oh, you're pro the other country. You're favoring one country over another.' That's not true," he said.

"Improved relations with one country is not at the expense of the other," he said. "By improving relations in both countries, we can move forward a general search for peace and stability in the region."

4. Remarks by Secretary Clinton, Israeli Defense Minister Barak (02-26-2010)

Clinton looks forward to discussing bilateral, regional issues

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton And Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak Before Their Meeting

SECRETARY CLINTON: It's a great personal pleasure for me to welcome back my friend and the Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak. The defense minister and I will be discussing a number of issues. Certainly, as he knows and as we have made clear many times, the President and I are deeply committed to a comprehensive peace beginning with a re-launch of meaningful negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians as soon as possible. We believe a two-state solution is the best way to end the conflict and guarantee peace, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

We will also be discussing the situation in Gaza. The people of Gaza deserve hope for a better future, and making sure that they have that hope is in both the interests of the Israelis and the Palestinians. Minister Barak and I will discuss the need to do more in this regard while keeping in mind very real Israeli security concerns: the stranglehold that Hamas is attempting to place on life in Gaza and Gilad Shalit's captivity by Hamas.

And we will also, I am sure, Minister, discuss Iran. We have pursued a dual-track approach to Iran. We remain committed to a diplomatic, peaceful resolution. But as the recent IAEA report makes clear, Iran is not living up to its responsibilities, and we are working with our partners in the international community to increase pressure on Iran to change course.

So, Minister Barak, it is indeed a pleasure. And we have so many serious matters to discuss together, but there is one matter that I have to raise that I was asked about in a congressional hearing yesterday, and that is trying to get nine containers of gefilte fish from the processing plant in Illinois to Israel in time for Passover. (Laughter.) So these are intractable problems; this one we might be able to solve. (Laughter.)

DEFENSE MINISTER BARAK: Thank you, Secretary Clinton. I am glad to be here. I can just tell you how much we appreciate the effort made by the Administration under the leadership of the Secretary and with Senator Mitchell at the front line to bring us and the Palestinians into substantial negotiations. We all want to see peace in our region. We understand that we'll have to take tough decisions while not losing eye contact with our security needs and making sure that both sides will be able to live in security and peace.

We also highly appreciate the effort made by President Obama and the Secretary to make sure that sanctions against Iran will become effective and that whatever title it get, get effective, limited in time, consequential, and without losing eye contact with the possibility that in spite of all effort, it will not lead to Iran accepting the international norms. I'm looking forward for fruitful discussion of all issues, including the gefilte fish.

SECRETARY CLINTON: (Laughter.) Thank you.

5. Ambassador Wolff on U.S. Vote on Middle East Resolution (02-26-2010)
Update on U.N. fact-finding mission on Gaza conflict

Statement by Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on a UN General Assembly Resolution on the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, in a Special Session of the General Assembly, February 26, 2010

Thank you Mr. President. The United States remains deeply concerned about the pain and suffering endured by both Palestinians and Israelis. We continue to believe that the best solution is to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region, including two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. There is no substitute for direct negotiations between the parties leading to the creation of a Palestinian state, and we should all be working to advance the cause of peace — not to hinder it. To this end, we must safeguard the ongoing efforts to restart Permanent Status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. President, the United States strongly supports accountability for any human rights and humanitarian law violations in relation to the Gaza conflict. Our goal in this regard remains to have domestic authorities carry out thorough, independent, and credible investigations of allegations of such violations. In that regard, we note Israel's submission of a detailed 46-page report to the Secretary-General providing information on its domestic investigations, and we note that the Palestinian Authority has recently established an Independent Investigative Commission. The issues raised by this resolution that are related to last year's conflict in Gaza should be resolved by credible domestic investigations and their follow-up.

We continue to believe that the Report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, widely known as the Goldstone Report, is deeply flawed. We have previously noted shortcomings that include its unbalanced focus on Israel, the negative inferences it draws about Israel's intentions and actions, its failure to deal adequately with the asymmetrical nature of the Gaza conflict, and its failure to assign appropriate responsibility to Hamas for deliberately targeting civilians and basing itself and its operations in heavily civilian-populated urban areas. The Goldstone Report is also problematic in its many overreaching recommendations and its sweeping legal and political conclusions. The Report contains, as does the resolution just voted, a counterproductive recommendation to convene the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and an inappropriate attempt to press action on the Security Council.

The resolution we have just voted reflects several of the same problems as the predecessor it recalls. For these reasons, we voted against the resolution.

Thank you Mr. President.

6. Statement on Outcomes of London Conference on Afghanistan (02-25-2010)
U.S. cites OSCE's commitment to intensify engagement with Afghanistan

The United States shares the views of others here that the London Conference on Afghanistan was successful in demonstrating the international community's continuing support for Afghanistan and in highlighting the importance of strong Afghan leadership.

We welcome the conference's emphasis on the importance of regional cooperation; greater efforts to combat terrorism, violent extremism, and narcotics trafficking; and enhanced efforts to tackle corruption and promote good governance, human rights, and economic development.

Toward these ends, we see continued opportunities for OSCE engagement with Afghanistan where the OSCE has unique expertise. This includes, in particular, efforts to improve the security and management of Afghanistan's northern border, counter illicit drugs trafficking, and improve the conduct of elections. We also hope to see more Afghans participate in OSCE-sponsored workshops, seminars, and conferences, which offer opportunities to make Afghans more familiar with OSCE norms and best practices across all three dimensions.

To that end, we add our thanks to the Chairmanship for the important role played by Kazakhstan's Embassy in Kabul in facilitating the participation of 35 Afghans in OSCE-organized counter-narcotics training in Dushanbe. We also thank the government of Japan for financing the project and the government of Tajikistan for hosting the training.

We welcome the Chairmanship's stated commitment to intensifying OSCE engagement with Afghanistan and look forward to continued efforts in this regard. We remain convinced that the OSCE could be even more effective if the organization had the flexibility to undertake certain activities inside Afghanistan, particularly those related to border security and training.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
